

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DANISH REACTION TO SWEDISH ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: COMMENTATORS HERE EXPECT LITTLE EFFECT IN DENMARK AS THE RESULT OF THE OUTCOME IN THE SWEDISH ELECTIONS ALTHOUGH THEY FORESEE A POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THOSE IN THE FRG. COMMENT BY DANISH POLITICAL LEADERS WAS ALONG PREDICTABLE PARTY LINES WITH PRIMIN ANKER JORGENSEN CHARACTERIZING THE SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC DEFEAT AS "UNFAIR". IN THE OPINION OF MOST DANISH EDITORIALISTS, A DESIRE FOR A CHANGE FROM 44 YEARS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RULE (NOT THE NUCLEAR POWER ISSUE) WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR THE PARTY'S DEFEAT. SOME DOUBT HAS BEEN EXPRESSED WHETHER THE THREE VICTORIOUS PARTIES WILL BE ABLE TO COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY BUT NO MAJOR CHANGES ARE EXPECTED IN SWEDISH FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. REACTIONS HERE TO THE SWEDISH ELECTION RESULTS HAVE BEEN PREDICTABLE ALONG DANISH PARTY LINES. MOST COMMENTATORS BELIEVE THAT THE IMPACT ON THE DANISH POLITICAL SCENE WILL BE MINIMAL. THIS IS BASED ON THE FEELING THAT THE PROSPECT OF EARLY ELECTIONS IN DENMARK

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IS A REMOTE ONE. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE, HOWEVER,

EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THEY MAY HAVE SOME IMPACT ON THE FORTHCOMING GERMAN ELECTIONS, ESPECIALLY SINCE "SOCIALISM" APPEARS TO BE AN IMPORTANT ELECTION ISSUE IN THE FRG. THIS VIEW IS PARTIALLY BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT, SOMEWHAT PARADOXICALLY, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SWEDISH AND DANISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IS MORE DISTANT THAN BETWEEN THE SWEDISH AND GERMAN PARTIES. IN A CONVERSATION WITH POLCOUNS, CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER POUL SCHLUTER, FOR EXAMPLE, NOTED THAT, IN HIS PERCEPTION, THE GERMAN SDP LEADERS SUCH AS BRANDT AND SCHMIDT IDENTIFY GERMAN PARTY GOALS WITH THOSE ACHIEVED BY THE SWEDISH SISTER PARTY AND HAVE DONE SO FREQUENTLY IN PUBLIC.

2. SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE SWEDISH ELECTION RESULTS FOLLOW:

A) IN A SEPTEMBER 20 STATEMENT, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN "REGRETTED" THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LOSS IN SWEDEN AS "UNFAIR". HE REGARDED IT AS AN INTERRUPTION OF 44 YEARS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT THAT HAD BROUGHT SWEDEN STABILITY AND PROSPERITY. HE SAW THE SWEDISH ELECTION RESULTS AS AN EXAMPLE OF A TREND TO THE RIGHT IN MANY PARTS OF EUROPE. LABOR MINISTER ERLING JENSEN ALSO MADE SIMILAR STATEMENTS IN A CONVERSATION WITH LABATT.

B) LIBERAL PARTY LEADER POUL HARTLING SAW THE SWEDISH RESULTS AS "GOOD FOR SWEDISH DEMOCRACY IN PARTICULAR AND FOR THE NORDIC AREA IN GENERAL" HE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS NOT HEALTHY FOR A DEMOCRACY WHEN ONE PARTY HELD A MONOPOLY ON POWER FOR SO LONG.

C) POLITIKEN (LEFT-OF-CENTER/INDEPENDENT) REPEATED A NOTE THAT HAS BEEN SOUNDED BY A NUMBER OF DANISH POLITICIANS AND COMMENTATORS. THE NEWSPAPER RECALLED THE SITUATION OF THE VKR COALITION GOVERNMENT (LIBERALS, CONSERVATIVES, RADICALS) WHICH CAME TO POWER IN DENMARK IN 1968. ACCORDING TO POLITIKEN, THAT GOVERNMENT FOUND ITSELF IN A POSITION OF BEING ABLE TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN FOLLOW THE PRECEDENTS SET BY FORMER SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS AND WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED INEFFECTIVE AND DISAPPOINTING. RIGHT WING FRUSTRATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH THE VKR FUELED WHAT BECAME MOGENS GLISTRUP'S PROGRESSIVES. A SIMILAR FRUSTRATION IN SWEDEN MIGHT PRODUCE PARALLEL RESULTS.

D) SOME HAVE HELD THAT THE BASIC REASON FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LOSS WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE "WRONG" ISSUE (NUCLEAR POWER). BUT THERE HAS BEEN MORE EXTENSIVE COMMENT (E.G., BERLINGSKE TIDENDE (INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE)) ASSIGNING THE REASON FOR THE ELECTION LOSS TO

GENERAL DISILLUSIONMENT, DISSATISFACTION AND DIS-
ENCHANTMENT WITH 44 YEARS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RULE.
E) THE FINANCIAL DAILY, BORSEN, COMMENTED THAT IT WAS
THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS THEMSELVES, NOT THEIR POLICIES,
THAT LOST THE ELECTION."A FLOURISHING INDUSTRY,
ALMOST FULL EMPLOYMENT, AND A COMPLETE SOCIAL SECURITY
SYSTEM WERE NOT ENOUGH FOR THE SWEDISH ELECTORATE WHO
FELT INCREASINGLY CONSTRAINED BY THE BUREAUCRATIC
SYSTEM THAT GREW UP DURING THE 44 YEARS OF SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT".

F) THERE IS AGREEMENT THAT NO RADICAL
CHANGES IN SWEDISH FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC POLICIES CAN BE
EXPECTED AS WELL AS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION WHETHER
THE THREE VICTORIOUS SWEDISH PARTIES WILL BE ABLE TO
COOPERATION IN GOVERNMENT. OFFICIAL DANISH
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC COMMENT DOUBTS THAT SUCH COOPERATION
WILL BE ACHIEVED AND LOOKS FORWARD TO OLOF PALME'S
RETURN TO POWER IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
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